

Application No. 10/736,475

**REMARKS / ARGUMENTS**

Renumbered claims 1 - 16 remain pending. New claims 17 - 20 have been added. No additional fee for the new claims is required. Claims 16-18 have been properly renumbered as 14-16. Applicants inadvertently misnumbered the claims as originally presented such that claim numbers 14 and 15 were omitted and therefore in fact only 16 claims were actually presented.

The examiner stated that claims 4 -11 and 16 -18 were objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim may not depend from another multiple dependent claim. Claims 3-11 and 14-16 have been amended to be dependent on one claim only thereby rendering this objection moot. New claims 17 through 20 once were multiple dependant claims 3 - 5 are now dependent claims depending from claim 2.

Claims 1, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The examiner noted that claim 1 is indefinite as it is unclear regarding the term "in particular". The examiner also stated that claim 12 uses the term "and/or" wherein only the term "or" applies; is unclear as to whether the limitation following "and/or" is to be included or not; and that it is unclear what is meant by "meter goods". Applicants corrected each claim as suggested by the examiner and removed "tubular meter goods" to read "tubular goods".

The examiner rejected claims 1 - 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saiguchi et al., US 6,715,788 B2 in view of Devonport, US 6,382,666 B1. The specification and claims have been amended wherein the two ends or free ends are flattened to form closed ends prior to being folded over. This is not new matter because this is how the invention is shown in figures 1 - 4 and 7 and is what was meant by the term the "free ends are pressed together to form a band shaped end portion" as recited at paragraph [0032]. Similarly each clamping means is shown as a substantially straight rod or bar that can be inserted through the formed flat loop as shown and described. This amendment is fully supported by the specification and drawing and introduces no new matter.

Applicants note the primary reference Saiguchi et al. did not teach this folding over of an end concept as was acknowledged by the examiner. The secondary reference of Devonport in particular Figure 6a used several ring clamps to affix the ends to housing ends of cylindrical shape, the airbag ends were folded, but remained open as shown. Applicants inventive design eliminated the need for a housing as the ends as now claimed are flattened and folded over in a closed fashion and thus is quite different from what is taught in these prior art references. Applicants respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

The examiner stated that claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Devonport in view of Busgen et al, US 2002/0067031 A1. Devonport in combination with Busgen similarly fails to teach or suggest the combination now found in

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amended claim 12. No references teach or suggest closing the ends by flattening and folding them over to form a loop. Busgen is retained on a seatbelt and does not show or suggest the folded ends, but rather show a simple stitching of the bag to the belt. Accordingly applicants request this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Devonport in view of Busgen as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of Utsumi et al., US 6,220,626 B1. The rejection of claim 13 in view of the amendment to claim 12 similarly fails. Utsumi et al, is an airbag for a seat belt wherein the concept of folding a flattened end is neither taught nor suggested. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

For the reasons stated above, applicants respectfully request the examiner to withdraw the rejections and allow the application to pass to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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